

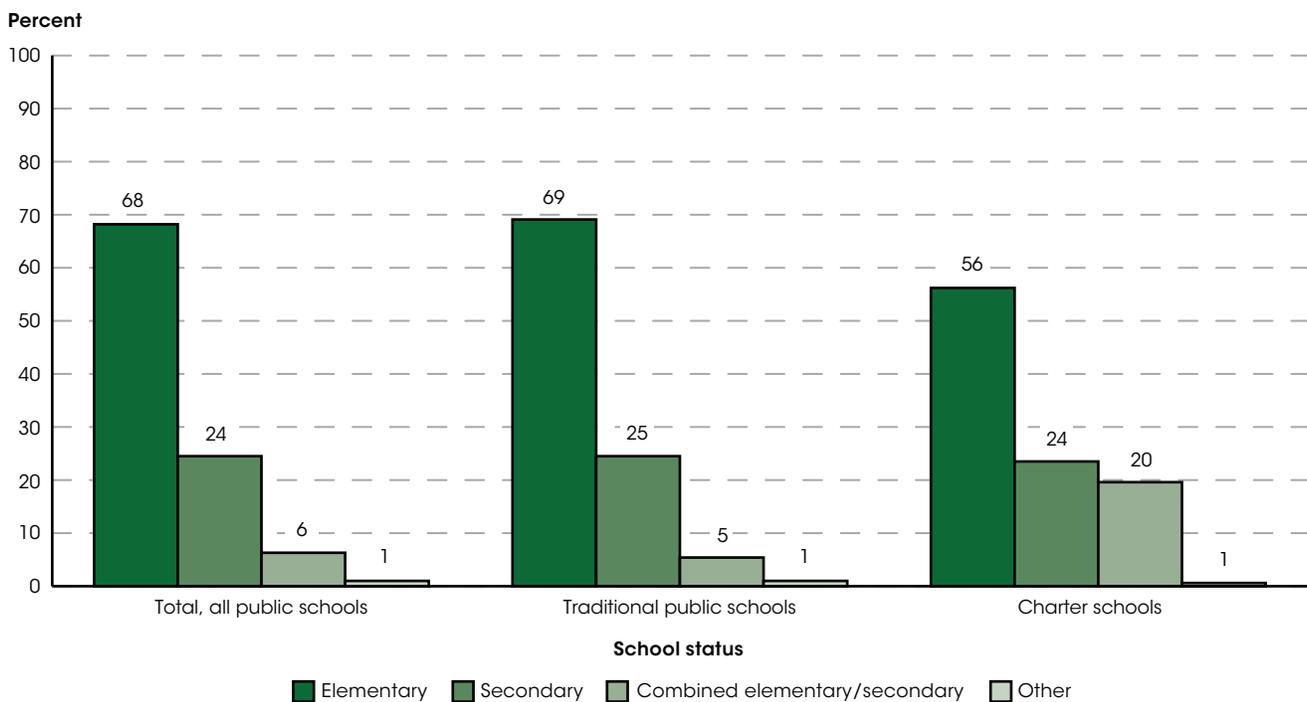
Characteristics of Traditional Public and Public Charter Schools

High-poverty schools, in which more than 75 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Program, accounted for 25 percent of all public schools in 2013–14. In that year, 24 percent of traditional public schools were high-poverty, compared with 39 percent of charter schools.

In school year 2013–14, there were 98,270 public schools in the United States, including 91,810 traditional public schools and 6,470 charter schools. The total number of schools was higher in 2013–14 than in 2003–04, when there was a total of 95,730 public schools, including 92,750 traditional public schools and 2,980 charter schools. Between school years 2003–04 and 2013–14, the percentage of all public schools that were charter schools

increased from 3 to 7 percent, while the percentage that were traditional public schools decreased from 97 to 93 percent. Between 2012–13 and 2013–14, the number of charter schools increased by 390 while the number of traditional public schools decreased by 570. See the [Charter School Enrollment](#) indicator for a description of charter schools and charter school legislation.

Figure 1. Percentage distribution of traditional public schools and charter schools, by school level: School year 2013–14

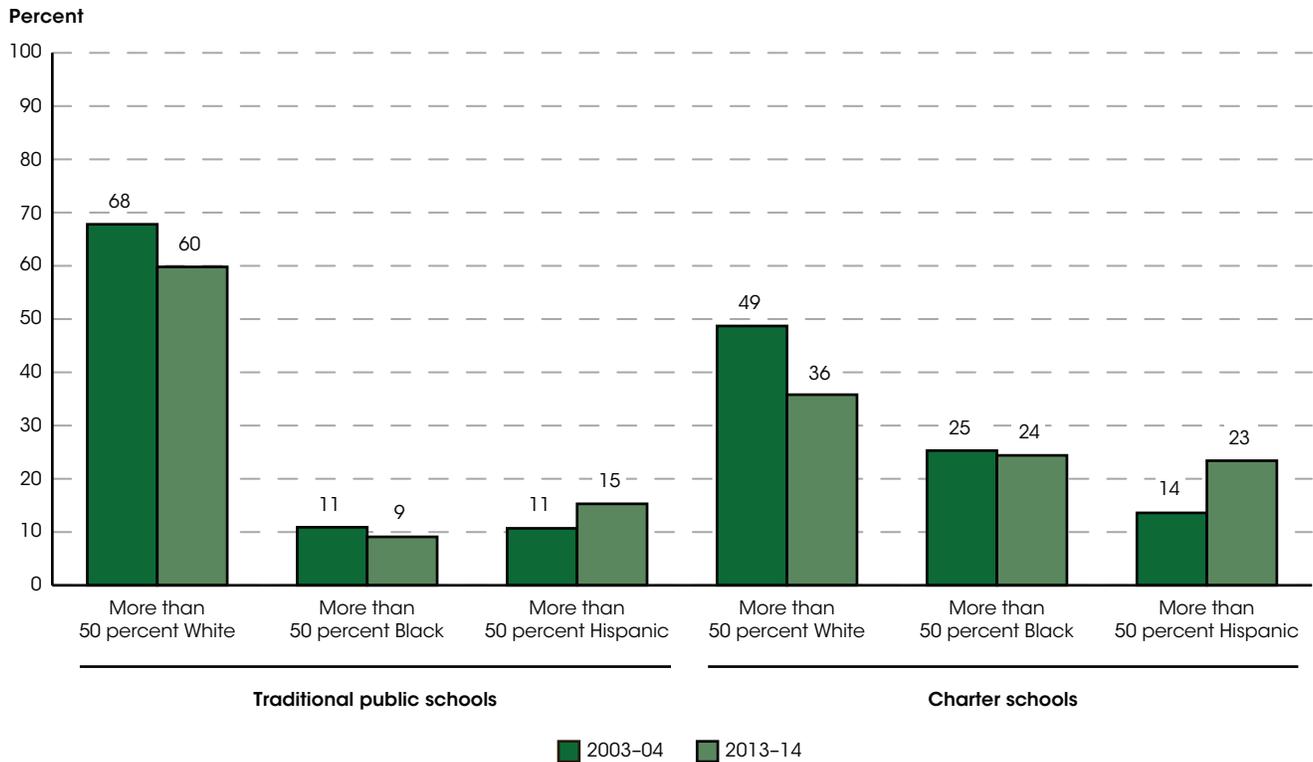


NOTE: "Elementary" includes schools beginning with grade 6 or below and with no grade higher than 8. "Secondary" includes schools with no grade lower than 7. "Combined elementary/secondary" includes schools beginning with grade 6 or below and ending with grade 9 or above. "Other" includes schools not classified by grade span. Detail may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2013–14. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 216.30.

Over two-thirds of traditional public schools (69 percent) were elementary schools in 2013–14, versus 56 percent of charter schools. By contrast, 20 percent of charter schools in 2013–14 were combined elementary/secondary schools

(schools beginning with grade 6 or below and ending with grade 9 or above), compared with 5 percent of traditional public schools.

Figure 2. Percentage of traditional public schools and charter schools, by racial/ethnic concentration: School years 2003-04 and 2013-14

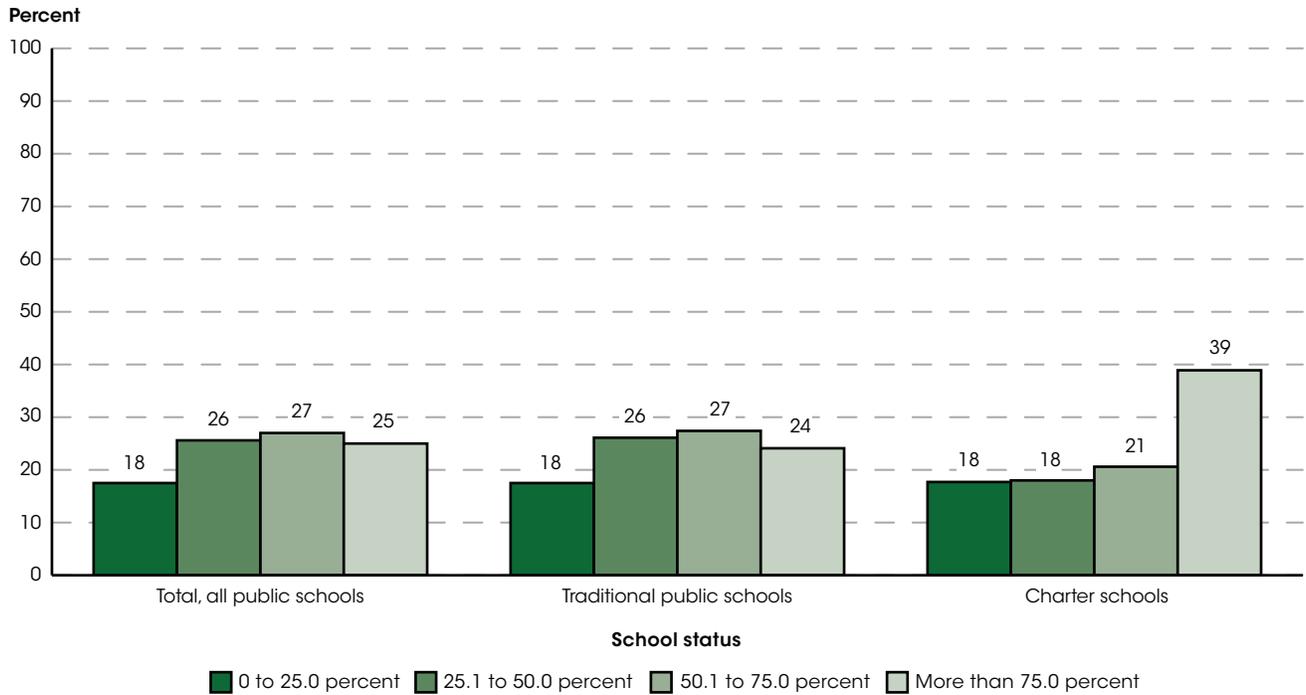


NOTE: Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2003-04 and 2013-14. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 216.30.

In 2013-14, in a majority (60 percent) of traditional public schools more than half of the students were White, while in 9 percent more than half of the students were Black and in 15 percent more than half of the students were Hispanic. In comparison, 36 percent of charter schools had more than 50 percent White enrollment, 24 percent had more than 50 percent Black enrollment, and 23 percent had more than 50 percent Hispanic enrollment. For both traditional public and public charter schools, the percentages of schools that had more than

50 percent White enrollment or more than 50 percent Black enrollment were lower in 2013-14 than in 2003-04, while the percentage of schools that had more than 50 percent Hispanic enrollment was higher in 2013-14 than in 2003-04. These shifts reflect, in part, changes in student demographics overall. Between 2004 and 2014, the percentage of children ages 5 to 17 who were White decreased from 59 to 53 percent, the percentage who were Black decreased from 15 to 14 percent, and the percentage who were Hispanic increased from 18 to 24 percent.

Figure 3. Percentage of traditional public schools and charter schools, by percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch: School year 2013–14

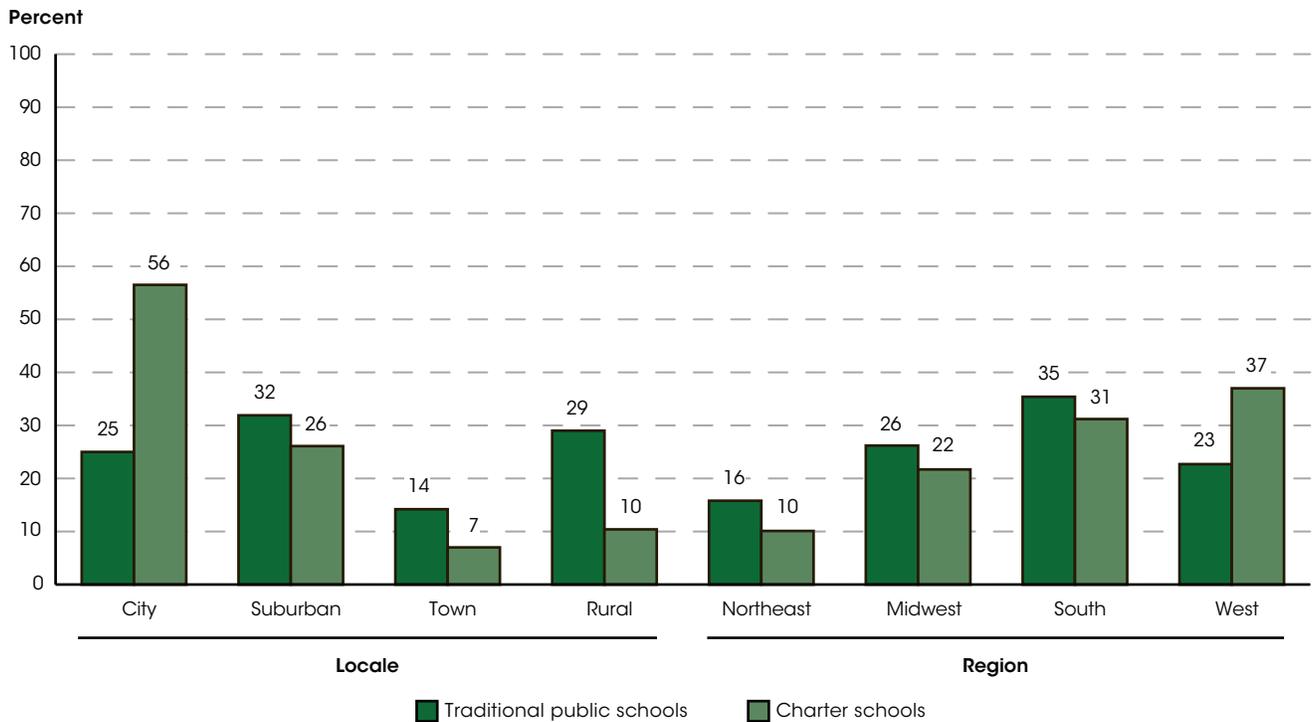


NOTE: The category “missing/school does not participate” is not included in this figure; thus, the sum of the free or reduced-price lunch eligible categories does not equal 100 percent. The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program. To be eligible for free lunch under the program, a student must be from a household with an income at or below 130 percent of the poverty threshold; to be eligible for reduced-price lunch, a student must be from a household with an income between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty threshold.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), “Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey,” 2013–14. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 216.30.

High-poverty schools, in which more than 75 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Program, accounted for

25 percent of all public schools in 2013–14. In that year, 24 percent of traditional public schools were high-poverty, compared with 39 percent of charter schools.

Figure 4. Percentage distribution of traditional public schools and charter schools, by school locale and region: School year 2013–14



NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2013–14. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, table 216.30.

In school year 2013–14, the majority of charter schools (56 percent) were in cities, compared with 25 percent of traditional public schools. In contrast, 10 percent of charter schools were in rural areas, compared with 29 percent of traditional public schools.

Regionally, the highest percentage of traditional public schools in 2013–14 was in the South (35 percent),

followed by the Midwest (26 percent), the West (23 percent), and the Northeast (16 percent). Charter schools followed a different pattern. In 2013–14, some 31 percent of charter schools were in the South, 22 percent were in the Midwest, 37 percent were in the West, and 10 percent were in the Northeast.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*, tables 101.20, 216.20, and 216.30

Related indicators: Public School Enrollment, Charter School Enrollment, Racial/Ethnic Enrollment in Public Schools, Concentration of Public School Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

Glossary: Charter school, Combined school, Elementary school, Enrollment, Free or reduced-price lunch, Geographic region, Locale codes, National School Lunch Program, Private school, Public school or institution, Racial/ethnic group, Secondary school, Traditional public school